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221907Z Dec 03

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 008405

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/22/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: SUNNI ROYALIST IRAQI DISCUSSES SUNNI SENTIMENT

Classified By: DCM David Hale for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) An Iraqi Sunni contact from the al-Darraji tribe in Samarra and advisor to the Royal Democratic Coalition party discussed with PolOff his views on Iraq and the Samarra region. Echoing a common theme, he claimed that most Iraqi Sunnis believe that the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) is marginalizing them and do not feel properly represented by the Sunni members on the U.S.-appointed Governing Council. End Summary.

SADDAM'S ARREST PROMPTS MIXED FEELINGS

2. (C) PolOff met December 16 with Salah al-Samirrai, a Jordan-based Iraqi from the Samarra area and advisor to the Royal Democratic Coalition political party, who travels often between Amman and Baghdad. Samarra is one of the "ambush-prone" Iraqi cities of the "Sunni Triangle." Al-Samirrai, although happy to see Saddam captured, was also saddened by what he termed "a weak moment for Iraqis."

CLASHES IN SAMARRA "SOUR" TRIBAL LEADERS ON U.S. FORCES

3. (C) According to al-Samirrai, a recent clash between insurgents in Samarra resulted in the death of approximately twenty people. Currently, Samirrai confirmed, tribal leaders in Samarra are upset with coalition forces. He suggested the U.S. military apologize to them. Sheikhs he spoke to warned that from now on they would deal "differently" with U.S. coalition forces.

SUNNI RESTLESSNESS

4. (C) Al-Samirrai said CPA-appointed governors are unrepresentative and seen as "out-of-touch", unresponsive, inaccessible, and incommunicative by average Iraqis. Al-Samirrai suggested the tribal leaders/sheikhs themselves could select representatives from each governorate to represent the "people". Al-Samirrai added that some Iraqis believe the U.S. is biased against them because Saddam Hussein is a Sunni. He said many Sunnis dismiss their representatives on the Governing Council, labeling Sunni Naseer al-Chaderchi and Adnan Pachachi as "Turks" and not real Arabs, and Samir Mahmoud, a Sunni who has lived for years in London, an "outsider."

5. Al-Samirrai remarked that many Sunnis he has talked to feel marginalized and threatened by what they term as a "pro-Shi'a" CPA in Baghdad. This alleged bias, many claim, has intensified the Sunni-Shi'a distinctions more than Saddam ever did. Many Sunni contacts stressed the CPA should reinforce the message that it is not against them and that they will be equal partners in the rebuilding of Iraq.

COMMENT

6. Al-Samirrai's views reflect his royalist affiliation and Sunni-Shi'a distrust in Iraq. His allegation that the CPA is biased against Sunni Iraqis would likely be contested by many outside the Sunni fold. Still, his claims of growing discontent among tribal leaders in the Samarra region are worth noting.

17. (C) BIO:

Name: Salah Al-Samirrai
DOB: 1965
Civil Status: Married, one son and six daughters
Tribal Affiliation: al-Darraji tribe
Religion: Sunni
Education: Completed a two-year Electrical engineering degree

Language Capacity: Native Arabic only

18. (U) CPA Baghdad minimize considered.

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